

This week's community profile: Norman



Bohemian church: The Rev. Lawrence Gerend talks about life in the rural St. Joseph parish. The church

takes part in Bohemian Days, celebrated this year with a parade, food and music June 28.

'Klatovy' was too hard to spell

By Karil Van Boxel

Press-Gazette

Where's Norman?

He could be in the barn, at St. Joseph Church or enjoying a pork, kraut and dumpling dinner at the Bohemian Inn.

But in this case, "he" is an it — a tiny rural community on Kewaunee County G about 30 miles from Green Bay.

**Press-Gazette photos
by Joan Guthridge**

About 22 Bohemian families home-steaded it in

1864. They wanted to name their settlement "Klatovy," after the city from which they came. But the name was too hard to spell in English and the post office became known as Norman.

Jerry Sinkula and his wife, Anne, are trying to preserve a piece of Norman's history, the general store. The building, in the heart of the community, has been vacant for about six years and last was a store in 1966.

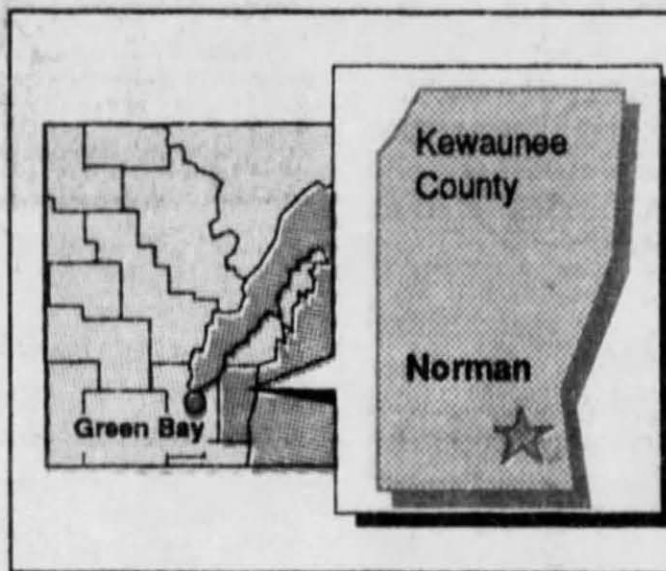
As a boy, Sinkula, 45, peddled his bike past the store on his way to school. "It was a place they went for medicines, groceries and to meet people," he recalled.

There was talk about tearing the building down. The property was in bad shape when he bought it.

Now the Sinkulas are trying to get it on the National Register of Historic Places. Plans include turning the home portion into a bed and breakfast or guest house inn and restoring the 1860 summer kitchen. The store would be returned to a turn-of-the-century look.

But the busy dairy farmer and carpenter is working as time permits. He doesn't know when it will be done.

"We pretty much want to preserve it just as it was in 1900," he said.



The Norman file

- **Population:** 30.
- **Now and then:** A church, tavern and homes make up Norman today. But in 1881 the farm community included a post office, three saloons, a dance hall, two hotels, two schools, a church, town house, cheese factory and two stores.
- **Norman who?** How the community got its name remains a mystery. But some believe the town of Carlton and hamlet of Norman were named after Norman Carlton.

Neighbor Richard Plansky, E3282 Highway G, lives two doors away and likes Sinkula's plans.

Plansky and his wife, Elsie, have lived in Norman for nearly 30 years. Retired from Hamilton Industries, Two Rivers, Plansky farmed until 10 years ago.

Now he devotes much of his leisure time to his hobbies: wooden lawn ornaments, decorative wooden figures of birds and animals and intricate miniature furniture made from juice cans.

Plansky also enjoys fishing in Green Bay at Dyckesville about 30 miles away.

Summertime is not all pleasure for Plansky, 73. He cuts seven acres of grass including the St. Joseph's Church lawn across the road and the nearby cemetery. He also keeps the church clean.

"I think I'm more busy now than when I was working," he said. "I want everything to look just like it does at home."

The brick church was built in 1904-05, although the first congregation built a log church about 1864, the Rev. Lawrence Gerend said.

Gerend, 64, has been at the church for eight years and likes the rural setting.

Afternoon sunshine flooded the church through its light stained glass windows as Gerend discussed the history of the 180-family congregation. "There used to be many more people, marriages and baptisms," he said. "The farms were small and families large."

The congregation celebrates SS. Peter and Paul Day the last weekend in June with an outdoor Mass and dinner.

The event is known as Bohemian Days, started by the former owner of the Bohemian Inn, E3302 County G, Terry Koutsky, the present owner said.

Koutsky brings in bands and his wife, Jean, cooks traditional fare for the event.

The Maple View Campground on Norman Road behind the church is Joyce La Crosse's summer occupation. The 65 sites draw visitors who enjoy the spring fed lake for swimming and fishing.

The La Crosse family's maple syrup, a spring project at Joyce and husband Stanley's farm, is sold at the camp store.

But today she is busy cooking the sap and preparing for an open house Sunday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. at their dairy farm at N1460 Highway B.



Norman craftsmen: Jerry Sinkula, above, stands in front of the old general store he plans to restore with a bed and

breakfast. Richard Plansky, right, paints wooden duck lawn ornaments he makes and sells.

